

This is unacceptable. It is unfathomable to me that Congress and this administration would let this landmark legislation merely expire.

In 1994, Congress came together with the leadership of then President Clinton to pass the Assault Weapons Ban legislation that banned the possession, transfer, or further domestic manufacture of semiautomatic assault weapons for ten years.

The legislation has had documented success.

The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that since 1994 the annual amount of gun related violence has declined by 70%. Unfortunately, tonight, we are on the cusp of taking a major step backwards with regard to protecting our citizens.

Prior to 1994, gun violence, especially among our children was off the charts. The number of homicides committed annually with a firearm by persons in the 14- to 24-year-old age group increased by 173% from 1985 to 1993.

Physicians, school teachers, police officers, mothers, fathers, Republicans and Democrats alike have all called my office this past week, and I'm sure many of my colleagues, and asked why the Republican controlled Congress has not done their job in protecting the American people, our children, our schools and our communities?

Nationally, 70% of the American people have spoken and their message is loud and clear—we need to extend the Assault Weapons Ban.

The National Association of Police Organizations, the National Coalition of Public Safety Officers both support reauthorizing this legislation. My chief of police in Los Angeles strongly supports reauthorizing this legislation.

Now is not the time to make it easier for criminals and terrorists to get their hands on assault weapons. We live in a different world, a more violent world. Much has changed since 1994.

We have been attacked as a country and as a people. Now more than ever we must make it more difficult for those who want to harm us to get their hands on weapons that have the potential for mass killing.

On Saturday, our country recognized the third anniversary of the horrific September 11th terrorist attacks.

Since that tragic day our Nation has waged an on-going war on terrorism, invaded Iraq with the intent of disarming Saddam Hussein, yet tonight we do not even blink in allowing weapons capable of mass killing back on our streets and in our communities.

We have created a Department of Homeland Security to protect the home front, our communities and our citizens.

At the same time, we are asking more from our community's police forces, while making huge cuts to the COPS program.

Our brave men and women who protect our communities are doing more with less. They are now our first responders, our last defense against a terrorist attack, all while they continue to do their job of protecting our communities. Our community's law enforcement have their hands full. We do not need to tie an arm behind their backs as they lead the fight on terror on the home front and continue to keep our communities safe.

This Administration, the Department of Homeland Security along with the Department

of Justice has gone to great lengths to create avenues in which to alert the American people that they are in danger.

The Department of Homeland Security has created an elaborate color alert system . . . red, orange, yellow, blue and green . . . to alert our citizens that they are in danger.

There has been much debate on how the administration chooses to use this new alert system or what is the criteria that causes the threat level to rise to red—well, tonight we are witnessing an example of an elevated threat level and it is coming from within our communities.

Our local law enforcement officials will now be on constant high alert because of this administration's inability to reauthorize the assault weapon ban bill. We cannot have inaction from the Bush Administration—we must have action to protect our citizens and our families.

IN SUPPORT OF KANSAS-ARMENIA PARTNERSHIP DAY

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an Armenian-American who has chosen Kansas as his home, and is tirelessly devoted to bringing Kansas and Armenia closer together. Alex Kotoyantz, now a resident of Junction City, Kansas, has worked with Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius to have June 18 designated as Kansas-Armenia Partnership Day.

The Kansas National Guard State Partnership Program has allowed Kansans to travel to Armenia twice for the purposes of assisting with peacekeeping operations as well as health and medical operations. As a former Soviet republic that has faced tragic ethnic conflict, Armenia is in need of assistance. Kansans can and are providing valuable aid.

I would like to include in the RECORD Governor Sebelius's proclamation that declares June 18 Kansas-Armenia Partnership Day. It reads as follows:

"Whereas, The National Guard's State Partnership Program has achieved outstanding success in establishing a military-to-military association and in improving security cooperation between the United States and partner countries; and

Whereas, Kansas is proud to partner with Armenia in military-to-military, military-to-civilian, and civilian-to-civilian contacts and development; and

Whereas, The Kansas National Guard hopes that this endeavor will foster goodwill between Kansas and Armenia and achieve a secure, prosperous and dignified future for the citizens of Armenia; and

Whereas, Armenia's Deputy Minister of Defense and the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense signed the Bi-Lateral Affairs Agreement at the close of the Bi-Lateral Defense Consultations, June 13-18, 2003; and

Whereas, Kansas is grateful for the contributions of Armenian Americans who have chosen Kansas as their adopted homeland; they have employed wisdom, courage and centuries-old traditions to enrich the character of our state;

Now, therefore, I, Kathleen Sebelius, Governor of the State of Kansas, salute the mod-

ern nation of Armenia and Armenians everywhere, and do hereby proclaim June 18, 2004, as Kansas-Armenia Partnership Day in Kansas and urge all citizens to join in this observance. Our state and the Armenian nation stand together, with our partnership of peace, prosperity and freedom."

I am proud that my state has taken this initiative, and I will continue to support the Kansas National Guard in its partnership with Armenia.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MAJOR R. OWENS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, because of an emergency in my district, I missed rollcall vote Nos. 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453 and 454. If present I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 446, 447, 448, 449, 452, 453 and 454 and "nay" on rollcall votes 444, 445, 450 and 451.

IN MEMORY OF FLORENCE FOGLE KEAHEY

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 15, 2004

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, on July 2, 2004, an esteemed writer and community supporter, Florence Fogle Keahey, died in Bonham, TX.

Florence Fogle Keahey was a noted writer in Fannin County. Born and raised on a farm near Ivanhoe, Florence quickly developed a love of the written word. She won her first prize at the age of 10, and she had several of her poems published in high school. Florence enrolled in the Correspondence School of the Newspaper Institute of America and was a reporter for many years with the Sherman Democrat. She wrote several articles, poems and stories for newspapers in Bonham, Sherman, Denison, and Dallas.

While her writing skills were impressive, she also devoted herself to serving the community of Fannin County. She was an organizing regent for the George Blakey Daughters of the American Revolution, a charter member of the D. Rowlett Chapter of Daughters of the Republic of Texas, a member of the Bonham Womens' Club, Iris Society, Texas League of Women Voters, Poetry Society of Texas, and the Democratic Women's Club of Fannin County, and president of the Ivanhoe Community Center. Florence also served Fannin County as its treasurer for 28 years.

Florence is survived by her daughter, Dottie Keahey Davis, grandchildren, Leasa Liles, Mitch Scott Davis and his wife, Melissa Lance Davis. Florence was also the loving grandmother of 5 great-grandchildren, and friend to a number of nieces and nephews.

Florence will be long remembered as a consummate community supporter. While she has left her home, her writings will live on as a testament to her intelligence and love for the citizens of Fannin County and Texas. On behalf of her many friends and fans, I want to take this opportunity in the House of Representatives to pay our last respects to this beloved woman—Florence Fogle Keahey.